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Hampshire Partnership



NHS Trust

Distributed to:

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 28th November 2008

Dear Colleagues

Areas for Improvement following Controlled Drugs Audit

You will be aware that the Trust now carries out quarterly audits of controlled drug storage and management within all inpatient ward areas within the Trust. These audits are being undertaken to provide assurance that the Trust is in adherence to both legal and best practise requirements for the storage of controlled drugs as one of the required outcomes from the Shipman enquiry.

Your local results are available from your pharmacist. The Trust wide results from the first audit were considered at the Directorate Clinical Governance Group and as a result of that discussion it was agreed that I would write to all ward managers formally to highlight the key areas where practise needs to improve. These key areas are as follows:

1. CD stocks should always reconcile. Staff must be reminded and change their practice to ensure that every time they order, receive, administer or handover discharge medicines they must check the relevant stock levels and ensure the record and stock tally. Action to be taken when an error has occurred is defined in Appendix B of MCAPP.
2. Weekly stock levels must become a part of the units regular processes. The procedure is described in Appendix A of MCAPP. This is the overall safety net to check stocks are all correct and accounted for. Failure to undertake these is a regular factor of 'lost' CD related incidents. Weekly checks to ensure that discrepancies are picked up sooner and are often easier to resolve. Strict checks also make it more difficult for anyone wishing to illegally obtained CDs from doing so.
3. The physical separation of higher strength diamorphine and morphine was a requirement of NPSA Notice 12 dated 25th May 2006. Such separation helps reduce the risk of incorrect strength selection which has been associated with fatal overdoses.
4. Storing items other than CDs in a CD cupboard is illegal. Staff should not be accessing the CD cupboard for any reason other than to deal with CDs and in which case there must be a witness. There is no need to use the CD cupboard for any other reason than the storage of CDs.
5. It is important to note that apart from a few exceptions due to illness, ward managers will have received training on the recently updated Medicines Control, Administration and Prescribing Policy by the end of August. Several key issues described in points 1-4 were not previously understood by some ward managers despite being trust policy for many years. This is important as ward managers are legally accountable for the correct storage of CDs on their unit and this should be highlighted in job descriptions and inductions for new ward managers.

Please can you bring these important points to the attention of all of your team who are involved in the safe storage and management of controlled drugs and contact me or your locality pharmacist if you need further clarity.



An NHS Teaching Trust with the University of Southampton

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It is important to make sure that your teams are aware of their personal accountability to ensure they follow legal requirements with regards to the safe storage and management of controlled drugs and that the Trust expect to see steady and sustained improvements towards the achievement of 100% compliance on all of these standards.

If you have any queries, please contact me.

Thank you.

Regards

Code A

Kevin Page
Associate Director of Nursing

